

IREX - Advancing MOOCs for Development Initiative (AMDI)

Reporting for Quarter Two – May 1 to July 31, 2015

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Acronyms & Abbreviations:

AMDI	Advancing MOOCs for Development Initiative
IIC	Inter-American Investment Corporation
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
RFP	Request for Proposal
SME	Small-Medium Enterprises
TASCHA	Technology and Social Changes Group, University of Washington
UMB	Manuela Beltran University
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary:

Activities in Quarter 2 of the Advancing MOOCs for Development Initiative (AMDI) centered around the selection of local research teams and creation of local research strategies and instruments; engaging in strategic partnership development to promote MOOCs with international stakeholders, and program outreach and promotion in South Africa and the Philippines.

Narrative:

Research:

Selection of Local Research Teams:

IREX and the Technology and Social Change Group (TASCHA) at the University of Washington collaborated in the RFP design and selection of local research vendors in the Philippines, Colombia and South Africa. After a competitive bidding process, the research teams in the respective countries are as follows:



- Philippines: Ideacorp is an independent, non-profit organization in Manila devoted to research, training and advocacy on development issues on the use of ICT for development (ICT4D). A key program they administer is ReimaginED, which is designed to deepen the understanding of the leadership of the Department of Education on key Information and Communications Technology for Education (ICT4E) issues. The project leader at Ideacorp is Mayette Macapagal.
- South Africa: Rhodes University's Department of Journalism and Media Studies in Grahamstown has collaborated with the Ikhamva National E-Skills Institute on surveys of mobile applications for media use and research on e-learning in collaboration with the Departments of Education and Computer Science at Rhodes University. The project leader at Rhodes University is Professor Lorenzo Dalvit.
- Colombia: In Colombia, through a subgrant with our local partner Makaia, IREX has chosen to partner with the Universidad Manuela Beltrán in Bogotá and the School of Virtual Learning. The project leader is Andres Felipe Mena.

Baseline Analytics

TASCHA explored CourseTalk's SQL Database and identified relevant tables and fields for the analysis of CourseTalk's registered users and reviews. As a first step, TASCHA computed descriptive statistics for available fields in the CourseTalk user profile data; explored data analysis options such as clustering, topic models, and keyword searching; developed a new keyword search algorithm to help extract reviews based on similarity to a topic and not an individual keyword; and employed Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic models to identify hidden topics in the reviews based solely on the review texts. A draft report with findings from the analysis of registered user profiles and course reviews will be available by the end of August, as well as a user map created by approximate locations using the recorded IP address around the world.

Design of Local Research Instruments:

IREX, TASCHA, and local research partners developed sampling strategies for online surveys of MOOC users and non-users in each country, the questionnaires for the MOOC user and non-user surveys, and key informant interview guides and strategy.

- Sampling Strategy for Online Survey MOOC Users and MOOC Non-Users: IREX, TASCHA and local partners developed a sampling strategy with total target population goals for statistically significant results in each of the three countries. To this end IREX and TASCHA worked with local research teams to refine country-sampling strategies including geographies covered, selection criteria and to ensure that a representative sample of business in high demand fields would be included into the research process. IREX and TASCHA, in collaboration with local research teams, mapped potential online and offline dissemination channels for survey instruments.
- MOOC User and Non-User Online Survey: IREX and TASCHA coordinated to design the first draft of the user and non-user surveys for online dissemination. During this process they integrated feedback from local research teams, reviewed the Spanish translation of the survey

instruments, programmed and tested the pending final version in Open Data Kit in both English and Spanish.

- Design of Key Informant Interview Guides: IREX, TASCHA and local partners identified relevant topics that will be addressed during the interviews and prioritized business leaders to identify how MOOCS can best facilitate workforce development challenges. The first draft of the Key Informant Interview guides has been submitted to the local research teams for review.

Outreach and Communications

IREX was able to engage with key stakeholders and MOOC users during a number of events in Quarter 2 of the project in order to increase visibility and engage in strategic planning.

- Meetings with CourseTalk in Menlo Park, California: On May 13-14, IREX, TASCHA and CourseTalk met to discuss expected goals, finalize timelines for deliverables, create a calendar for new opportunities, discuss frameworks for new partnership development, and assess CourseTalk's in-kind contributions to the initiative. As a result of the meeting, IREX contributed to the panel that CourseTalk led during the NewCo conference via video conference, added a space to the AMDI landing page to highlight relevant content discovered in the field, created a map of policy makers and educational institutions in the Philippines, and reached out to Edraak and USAID about the possibility of partnering and expanding the AMDI program in the Middle East. Nelson Mandela Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Expo, South Africa: On May 18 and 19 in Johannesburg, South Africa, IREX promoted the AMDI program while at the Young African Leaders Initiative Expo and through visits to universities and other stakeholders in South Africa. In addition, IREX authored an article on how YALI Nelson Mandela Fellows use MOOCs to empower themselves and their respective organizations.



AMDI Director meets with YALI fellows

<https://www.irex.org/news/two-african-perspectives-moocs-amdi-project-director-interview-mandela-washington-fellows>

- Visit to the Philippines: On May 20 IREX's CoP Scott Andersen relocated to the Philippines. The following week he and Maria Garrido of TASCHA visited several players in online learning:
 - The Dean of Student Advancement at Cavite State University; where he met with Cavite State University's Department of Extension Services. The Department affords e-learning instruction and internet centers to farmers to enable agricultural producers to better understand issues related to crop sales consortiums, pricing, soil and water quality, marketing, and organic growing recommendations.
 - Representatives and beneficiaries of the Philippines's eSkwela program at two e-learning centers in Cavite where students who have either left school to work or merely wish to improve their academic skills can continue their studies.



- Dr. Melinda Bandalaria, Dean of the School of Communications and Journalism at the Open University of the Philippines to discuss the AMDI Initiative and ways in which the University can support our efforts in the country since it is creating MOOCs for local workforce development in partnership with the Asian Development Bank.

As a result of these meetings, IREX authored a piece on how farmers are using e-learning resources in the Philippines to advance agricultural development. <https://www.irex.org/news/how-are-farmers-philippines-embracing-online-learning>

Partnerships:

IREX has attempted two significant strategic partnerships during Quarter 2 to expand and develop AMDI. The first is the creation of a nascent MOOCs Expert Committee, and the second is an ongoing dialogue with USAID's MENA division concerning the possibility of expanding AMDI into the Middle East and North Africa in partnership with CourseTalk and Edraak.

- **MOOCs Expert Committee:** The MOOC expert committee is a rallying platform of professionals of different industries, organizations and countries working to advance the development of social learning through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). The purpose of the MOOCs Expert Committee is to provide a space for dialogue and an exchange of ideas about innovative practices, technologies, market drivers and pedagogical aspects around the world regarding online social learning. The members of the Committee are IREX, TASCHA, Telefonica, the Inter-American Investment Corporation (IIC), CourseTalk, and potentially the World Bank and Edraak. The MOOC Expert Committee seeks to act as a consulting body offering guidance, support and expertise on the launching of new MOOC related initiatives.
- **AMDI in the Middle East:** IREX has met with and submitted two concept papers to USAID in an effort to expand ADML into the Middle East in partnership with Arabic Language MOOC provider Edraak. To this end IREX, submitted a proposal to USAID on April 27 to potentially review the web analytics of Edraak, engage in Middle East research on MOOC usage, and look at how MOOCs might be applied to refugee populations and the underemployed in terms of workforce development.

Challenges or issues of concern:

Programmatically, none for Quarter 2. IREX is waiting to learn more from USAID on the potential expansion of AMDI to the MENA region.

Table of Indicators:

Please see attached spreadsheet

Issues for USAID action/attention:

None at this time

Lessons learned/best practices:

External interest in AMDI: After finalizing the “Get Involved” google form on the AMDI landing page, AMDI has received several requests for information. Several of these from Telefonica and the ICC have led to the formation of the MOOC Expert Committee. It is clear that there is strong interest from external stakeholders to learn more about the potential of MOOCs, share data, and collaborate in other ways. AMDI should keep this in mind moving forward with the awareness raising and marketing campaigns.

Upcoming activities:

- IREX President Kristin Lord to meet with Arizona State University President Michael Crow in part to discuss AMDI and ASU’s Freshman Academy – 1 August
- IREX meets with World Bank in hopes of including e-institute in the MOOCs Expert Committee – 4 August
- IREX CoP addresses TechSalon of international NGOs on AMDI – 11 August
- Preliminary Analytics report based on CourseTalk User Data – 15 August
- Field research simultaneously launched in Colombia, South Africa and Philippines – 23 August